

## PICTURE BOOK

# Mormon photographer captured a 'Savage View'

By Carma Wadley

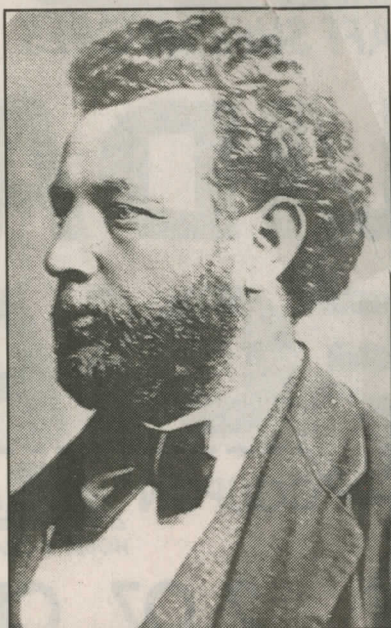
Deseret News feature editor

**THE SAVAGE VIEW:** Charles Savage, Pioneer Mormon Photographer, by Bradley Richards; Carl Mautz Publishing; 192 pages, \$45 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

Throughout his life, Charles Roscoe Savage had a different way of looking at the world, both in his professional and private life. As one of the first major Mormon photographers, he had an eye for composition, for scenic beauty and human-interest sights. But he was also a keen observer of society in general. Mostly self-educated, but very articulate, he kept detailed journals. And he tended to see the need in folks and what could be done to help. Thus his life was one not only of pictures, but also of service, which makes it a good candidate for the show-and-tell treatment given it in this attractive volume.

Bradley Richards, an Ogden physician specializing in neuro-ophthalmology, is a serious collector of historical photographs who became fascinated by the life of one of the early photographers. His primary source material includes some of Savage's journals, and thus he is able to draw a fairly complete picture of the man's life. Good attention is paid to historic detail, so the reader comes away with a feel for the times as well.

Born in England in 1832, Savage grew up in poverty and, as a child, sold salt door to door to help support his family. At age 16, he came into contact with Mormon missionaries and soon joined the church. He served a mission in Switzerland, and then in 1856 was asked by church leaders to accompany a group of Swiss and Italian Saints to New York. The time he spent in New York, earning money to send for his sweetheart, Annie Adkins, proved pivotal in his life. It was here that he was introduced to the art of photography. "His friend Stenhouse had brought a stereoscope camera with him from England, and in their spare time the two young men experimented with its use. Some family histories written of Savage have claimed that



Charles Savage's life was one of both pictures and service.

these were the first stereoscope pictures produced in the United States. Charles himself, in a later writing, was less ambitious, claiming only that they were the first stereographs made on Long Island."

There is some confusion about just where Savage received his photographic training — whether



Savage photographed the driving of the golden spike into the rails at Promontory Point, producing one of his more famous pictures.

he served as an apprentice or whether it was by reading journals of the day. But by the time he and his young family arrived in Council Bluffs in 1859, and in the Salt Lake Valley in 1860, he had determined it would be his life's work. Headquartered at his Art Bazaar on South Temple, from 1861 to 1900, Savage traveled throughout West

recording the people, the places and the times. He was there for the joining of the rails at Promontory Point (one of his more famous pictures), and he took the first scenic pictures of what would be Zion National Park and other southern Utah sites. He took photographs of Indians, church leaders, theatrical personalities. He recorded the c



struction of the Tabernacle and the Temple. He was there when Utah became a state.

Along the way he continually updated his techniques, learning the new processes as they came along, going from wet plates to dry plates. "Ambrotypes, melainotypes, stereoviews, carte-de-vistes, miniature photographs, locket pictures, life-size portraits, tinted photos in both watercolors and oils with all offered to the clientele of Savage and Ottinger." (For awhile, artist George Ottinger was his partner).

And in between, he was active in LDS Church and community affairs. He ran for a political office but was not elected. He entered into plural marriage. He initiated the popular Old Folks' Day, which honored senior citizens in the valley. And he helped friends and neighbors in need.

His was a full life, and Richards details it well. But equally important are his photographs — intricate, telling views of a world now gone. The end of the photo album came much too soon. Alas, many of Savage's glass negatives were lost in two fires that struck his studios. Others were perhaps tossed out by family members who did not recognize their value. And so there aren't as many pictures out there as there should be, which makes the ones that have been preserved all the more important. And it makes this collection a treasure for history buffs, photo buffs and students of society alike.

## Photographer shows writers at their desks

New York Times News Service

NEW YORK — Jill Krementz has become expert in a subject close to home: the habits and rituals of writers. It comes not just from her living with a writer (her husband is Kurt Vonnegut) but also from her 35 years of photographing writers.

Last year she decided to put together a book called "The Writer's Desk," which is to be published next year by Random House.

"When I decided to do the book and to photograph more writers, I made a special effort to photograph them at their desks," she said. "The greatest surprise was how many writers still prefer using a pen or an old-fashioned typewriter."

She learned, she said, that Toni Morrison feels compelled to begin writing before dawn, while Rita Dove does not start until dusk and then works by candlelight. Pat Conroy writes at a standing desk, and Joan Didion sleeps with her manuscript when she is almost finished. "She says that somehow the book doesn't leave you when you're next to it," Krementz said.

About a month ago she visited Eudora Welty, who at 86 can no longer work at the desk shown in the 1972 photograph that is included in the book because she cannot climb stairs. "She looked at the photo and said, 'Why Jill, it's just like a visit upstairs.'"